An Annotated Translation and Exegetical Notes on Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa 3.2

अथ भगवान् आह ।

atha bhagavān āha |

§3.2a Now, the Bhagavān[1] said:

आदौ त्रिशरणं दद्यात् पञ्चशिक्षाश् च पोषधम्।
ततः पञ्चाभिषेकं तु गुह्यं प्रज्ञां च शेषतः॥ २ ॥

ādau triśaraṇaṃ dadyāt pañcaśikṣāś ca poṣadham |
tataḥ pañcābhiṣekaṃ tu guhyaṃ prajñāṃ ca śeṣataḥ || 2 ||

§3.2b First the triple refuge[2] should be given, together with the five disciplines[3] and the Poṣadha[4] observance.

§3.2c Then the five consecratory anointings[5] are to be conferred, and finally the secret[6] and the wisdom-consort anointing.[7]

Note. The sequence ādau (“first”), tataḥ (“then”), and śeṣataḥ (“finally”), together with the optative dadyāt, indicates a ritual instruction sequence typical of tantric initiation manuals.

Chapter III - Consecratory Anointing (*Abhiṣeka*), *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa, “The wrathful force that arises, strikes, gathers power, erupts, tasting the essence of what is encountered, refining into awakened force, and sealing itself as irreversible gnosis”* (*Toh 431*).

Footnotes

1. The term Bhagavān, “the Blessed One” or “Venerable Lord,” indicates the one who possesses bhaga, the ṣaḍguṇas, or the group of six blessed qualities. These are:

1. *jñāna* (*knowledge*),
2. *aiśvarya* (*sovereignty*),
3. *śakti* (*ability, potency*),
4. *bala* (*strength*),
5. *vīrya* (*virility, unaffectedness*)
6. *and tejas* (*splendour*).

*2. Triśaraṇa (**त्रिशरण**), “the three refuges”, refers to the formal act of taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha.*

3. The five disciplines are:

Prāṇātipātāt prativiratiḥ
Refraining from taking life.

Adattādānāt prativiratiḥ
Refraining from taking what is not given (stealing).

Kāmeṣu mithyācārāt prativiratiḥ
Refraining from sexual misconduct.

Mṛṣāvādāt prativiratiḥ
Refraining from false speech (lying).

Surā-maireya-madyapramāda-sthānāt prativiratiḥ
Refraining from consuming intoxicants that cause heedlessness.

4. The Poṣadha (पोषध) observance is a preparatory discipline of fasting and restraint undertaken before initiation. In tantric understanding it serves to purify and stabilise the practitioner so that the elemental forces of the body may be withdrawn (saṃhāra), gathered into the central channel, and drawn upward as a single current. This ascent culminates in the abhiṣeka, the yogic consecratory anointing above the crown that precedes the illumination of gnosis.

5. The five consecratory anointings, पञ्चाभिषेक (pañcābhiṣeka), constitute the formal tantric initiation through which the disciple is ritually authorised to enter the maṇḍala and undertake the corresponding practices. In many Vajrayāna systems these five are understood as the crown, vajra, bell, name, and master (ācārya) consecrations. They purify the aggregates and empower the practitioner to recognise the body, speech, and mind as the field of awakened activity.

In the verse, the nouns guhyaṃ and prajñāṃ are elliptical for guhyābhiṣekaṃ and prajñābhiṣekaṃ, the word abhiṣeka being understood from the preceding pañcābhiṣekaṃ.

6. The गुह्याभिषेक (guhyābhiṣeka), "secret consecration," refers to the initiation that introduces the practitioner to the inner yogic process by which the vital essences (bindu) and subtle energies (prāṇa) are gathered and directed within the central channel (avadhūtī). It is termed "secret" because its meaning is realised through direct experience rather than public instruction, revealing the identity of bliss and emptiness within the subtle body.

7. The प्रज्ञाभिषेक (prajñābhiṣeka), "wisdom-consort consecration," represents the culmination of the initiatory sequence. Here the practitioner recognises wisdom (prajñā) as the inseparable counterpart of method (upāya), expressed through the presence of the wisdom-consort (Śakti). This consecration seals the realisation that awakened gnosis arises through the union of bliss and emptiness. It marks the transition from external empowerment to the direct cultivation of liberating knowledge experienced as the abhiṣeka anointing, and its illumination.

English translation and footnotes, Śrī Maccidānanda Nātha (04/03/2026).